

# Together With



WINTER 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR &amp; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Contacting Overhead Power Lines with Metal Ladders

A NIOSH review of Bureau of Labor Statistics data from 1992 to 2005 identified at least 154 electrocution deaths resulting from contacting overhead power lines with portable metal ladders. The data indicate a disproportionate rate of deaths among Hispanic workers involved in such incidents.



**Case Study** —A 32-year-old painter picked up his 40-foot metal ladder and retracted it to approximately 20 feet. While carrying the ladder upright to the work van, the ladder contacted the 13,200-volt overhead power line located approximately 21 feet above the ground. The painter was pronounced dead in the hospital emergency room.

## Working Safely in the Cold

When the body is unable to warm itself, serious cold related illnesses and injuries may occur, and permanent tissue damage and death may result. Cold related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.

**LOW TEMPERATURE + WIND SPEED +  
WETNESS = INJURIES & ILLNESS**

Hypothermia can occur when land temperatures are above freezing or water temperatures are below 98.6°F/ 37°C. Call for emergency help (i.e., ambulance or call 911) and move the person to a warm, dry area. Don't leave the person alone. Remove any wet clothing and replace with warm dry clothing or wrap the person in blankets. Have the person drink warm sweet drinks (sugar water or sports-type drinks) if he is alert. Avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol. Have the person move his arms and legs to create muscle heat. DO NOT rub the person's body or place him in warm water bath, as this may stop his heart.

### Preventative Steps for Employers to Take

1. Identify the location of overhead power lines as a routine part of an initial worksite survey involving the use of ladders.
2. Avoid or limit proximity to power lines whenever possible.
3. Notify the local electric utility company for assistance if work needs to be done near energized overhead power lines.
4. Eliminate the use of metal ladders near energized overhead power lines.
5. Ensure that workers maintain a safe working distance from power lines.
6. Do not store equipment or materials below or near overhead power lines.
7. Consider the languages and reading skills of workers when training them.

### Preventative Steps for Workers to Take

1. LOOK UP! Note the location of overhead power lines.
2. Always assume overhead power lines are energized and dangerous.
3. Do not use metal ladders when working near overhead power lines.
4. Always lower the ladder and carry it horizontally when moving it.
5. Follow the 1:4 rule—for every four feet between the ground and the upper point where a ladder is resting, set the feet of the ladder out one foot horizontally.



Together with TOSHA is the newsletter of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

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## OSHA Issues Employer Payment for Personal Protective Equipment Final Rule

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On November 14, 2007, OSHA announced a new rule clarifying the employer/employee responsibilities for payment of personal protective equipment (PPE). Many OSHA standards require employers to provide their employees with protective equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), when such equipment is necessary to protect employees from job-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. These requirements address PPE of many kinds including hard hats, gloves, goggles, safety shoes, safety glasses, welding helmets and goggles, faceshields, chemical protective equipment, and fall protection equipment.

### **Some significant points specified in the new rule include the following:**

- The rule requires employers to pay for almost all personal protective equipment that is required by OSHA's and TOSHA's general industry, construction, and maritime standards.
- The rule does not create new requirements regarding what PPE employers must provide.
- The rule does not require payment for uniforms, items worn to keep clean, or other items that are not PPE.
- The rule contains exceptions for certain ordinary protective equipment such as safety-toe footwear, prescription safety eyewear, everyday clothing and weather-related gear, and logging boots.
- If employees choose to use PPE they own, employers do not have to reimburse the employees.
- Employers cannot require employees to provide their own PPE.
- Even when an employee provides his or her own PPE, the employer must ensure that the equipment is adequate to protect the employee from hazards at the workplace.
- Employers are required to pay for replacement PPE, except when an employee has lost or intentionally damaged the PPE.

The new rule is an amendment to the existing PPE standard and will be added as a new paragraph (h). The paragraph becomes effective February 13, 2008, and employers must implement the new PPE payment requirements by May 15, 2008.



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# LEARN & LIVE

*From the Public Sector Files*

A county highway department employee was killed when he was caught between the frame and dump box of a dump truck. The victim had been hauling rock in the dump truck for road construction. At the end of the day he returned the truck to the highway department and parked it in the spray washing area for its daily cleaning. He raised the dump truck box but did not position the safety pin which, when engaged, does not allow the box to fall down. After spraying the dump truck initially, he positioned himself between the frame of the truck and the raised box, perhaps to clean this area. The dump box then fell down onto the victim crushing his chest between the box and the truck frame. Cause of death was asphyxiation due to crushed upper chest area.



To prevent such an accident from happening:

1. Establish a program consisting of energy control procedures, employee training and periodic inspections to ensure that before any employee performs any servicing or maintenance on a machine or equipment where the unexpected energizing, start up or release of stored energy could occur and cause injury, the machine or equipment shall be isolated from the energy source and rendered inoperative.
2. Conduct a periodic inspection of the energy control procedures at least annually to ensure that the procedures and the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.147 are being followed.
3. Provide training to ensure that the purpose and function of the energy control program are understood by employees and that the knowledge and skills required for the safe application, usage, and removal of the energy controls are acquired by employees.
4. Certify that employee training has been accomplished and is being kept up-to-date. The certification shall contain each employee's name and the dates of training.